Design Resource

Applique Work - Sonpur, Orissa

Handcrafted designer products
by
Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Rakshitha
NID, Bengaluru

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/applique-work-sonpur-orissa

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2. Tools and Raw Materials
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Introduction

A country's traditional art, craft heritage and craftsmanship are symbolized through the handicrafts of the nation. India's rich cultural ethnicity and its unique form amidst various cultures and societies have been fabulously presented in the form of craft also. These handicrafts are made by hand using simple tools and technology that usually appear in artistic and traditional forms. In this case, the Indian handicraft industry has evolved immensely and has brought a major contribution to the nation's economy by generating several employment opportunities. One among such crafts that are of low capital investment yet unique in design patterns that forms the most distinctive and attractive handicrafts which lead on to the major strength of Indian craft tradition is 'applique work' of Orissa.

The word 'applique' is a French verb that translates the term as 'to apply'. It is an age-old technique in which all the small embellishments are superimposed onto the larger surface article. This technique of superimposing the embellishments was utilized well during 1965, which was intended to be a modern-day Bayeux tapestry. For centuries it has also become a part of religious tradition in India. It holds remarkable prominence in other countries like Pakistan, China, Benin and Egypt too.

Applique works are prepared by craftsmen through sewing and by using zigzag machines to export the final product. These are the most decorative items used for beautifying walls, covering instruments, household articles, luxurious goods etc. These are handmade designer products, thus it has high demand in the market. Nowadays the craftsman from different parts of Orissa also prepares various items using this technique like screen cover, TV cover, computer cover etc. The kind of cloth used for preparing the applique work depends on the craftsmen and differs from region to region. Some of the varieties of clothes that are used for applique work are cotton, tericot, polyester, silk and velvet.

Being one of the largest states of India in terms of generating the number of handicraft artisans, Orissa produces the world's acclaimed unique handmade goods. These handicrafts are exported to several other countries like Australia, Canada, France, Germany and etc, which have highly contributed to terms of the state's economy. Hence in this competitive world, as globalization has produced varieties of responses in the lea of culture, the Indian folk creation like applique work has come out in a form like applique umbrellas.

The applique works that have an age-old history are noted in the literature that the applique work products were used in Lord Jagannath temples for decoration purposes since 1054A.D on different occasions throughout the state. The usual motifs of applique work are flowers, animals, geometrical shapes, sometimes the mythological figures etc. The inspiration for these motifs is usually from nature. It is an art form that is generally dependent on four basic colours black, white, red and yellow which produces a striking effect.

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Multicoloured applique work.

Floral designed applique work.

Artisan working on applique work.

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Close-up of the textile on which embroidery work is done to complete the applique work.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Tools and raw materials used for Applique work are as follows:

- **Fabric:** Fabric is the base material that is used for making applique work.
- **Thread:** By using thread the pieces of fabric are stitched together.
- **Needle:** It is used for hemming/stitching the bits of fabric.
- **Scissor:** It is used for cutting the excess thread and fabric.
- **Metal Embroidery Hoop Rings:** These are used to hold fabric tightly while doing embroidery.
- **Plastic Mirrors:** They are inserted in-between the embroidery and are used for beautifying the applique work.

Varieties of fabric used for preparing applique work.

Scissor is used for cutting the fabric.

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Thread is used for sewing the fabric bits to the base cloth.

Metal embroidery hoop rings that are used to hold fabric firmly while doing embroidery.

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Making Process

Cotton fabric is the basic material that is used for making any artifact of the applique work. The making of applique work is initiated by the selection of desired colour fabric. Further, the fabric is cut into the required length to prepare the base platform. Upon this, the design that has to be made is decided. As per the design, the fabric is cut in shapes that are usually complementary coloured ones, which match the colour of the base cloth. Sometimes apart from the complementary colours, different colours are also used as per the customer's or as per the artisan's perception. All the shaped cut pieces of fabric are then arranged on an even surface of base material to finalize the design. Once the design and the pattern are satisfied, those shaped fabric bits are randomly stitched to base cotton fabric material to set the required form. The motifs used for applique are usually floral designs and geometrical forms. Further the edges of these fabric bits of the chosen motifs are completely hand-stitched. Sometimes they are hemmed or sometimes according to the design pattern the embroidery is made on them. Plastic mirrors are also inserted in-between the embroidery for the beautification purpose. The random stitches are further removed completely. Thus the fine details are skillfully rendered and are carefully packed for the sales.

The smallest size of the applique work is 2 meters and goes up to the size of the requirement of the customer. The smallest applique work requires a minimum of two days to complete the work. The cost of the product differs according to the material of cloth, the effort of artisan put in and the designs that are made.

Appropriate colour combination of fabric is selected to make the applique work.

The designer fabric pieces are placed on the base cloth as per the design pattern.

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They are individually stitched to the single base cloth.

Glimpse of artisans stitching the fabric pieces individually.

Artisan makes a single random stitch at the initial stage for the grip purpose.

Close-up of the stitched fabric piece.

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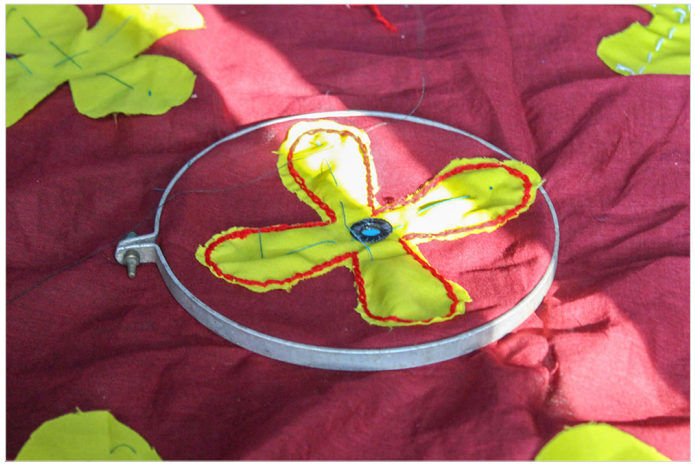
Then the cloth is fixed to the metal embroidery hoop ring.

The artisan further initiates to make embroidery.



Glimpse of the embroidery made on a specific part of the applique work.

Once the embroidery is done, the metal hoop ring and the random stitch is removed.

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Products

Numerous bits of multicoloured geometrical shaped fabric stitched to the single stretch base cloth that appeals as a textured textile is a wonderful pictorial delicacy for any individual to admire. The durability of this fabric that is made of applique work is comparatively longer. As these fabric bits are stitched together they are not easily damaged. It can be used for both decorative and for any other useful purpose. Some of the products that are manufactured in Orissa are:

- Carpets.
- Pillow covers.
- Wall hangings.
- Bedsheets.
- Curtains etc.

Floral designed wall hanging made of applique work.

Multicoloured applique work with suitable embroidery.

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This documentation was done by Professor Bibhudutta Baral and Rakshitha at NID, Bengaluru.

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